United Nations A/53/169/Add.2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 September 1998
English
Original: English//Spanish

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 71 (m)
General and complete disarmament: small arms

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contents

		Page
II.	Replies received from Governments	2
	Brazil	2
	Bulgaria	2
	Mexico	3

98-27837 (E) 051098 081098

II. Replies received from Governments

Brazil

[Original: English]
[11 September 1998]

The Brazilian Government endorses the conclusions presented by the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. The Brazilian Government congratulates the Chairman and the members of the Panel of Experts and the Secretariat for the excellent work they have done.

The Brazilian Government also wishes to support the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects. Such a conference should, however, be preceded by adequate preparation by a committee open to the participation of all interested countries and mandated to define, in detail, the goals, the agenda and the scope of the conference.

Bulgaria

[Original: English]
[31 August 1998]

Bulgaria endorses the Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (A/52/298) and finds the recommendations contained therein to be an appropriate basis for further consideration and action by the international community on the issue of small arms.

With regard to the specific recommendations as set out in paragraphs 79 and 80 of the report, Bulgaria would like to communicate the following:

Paragraph 79 (a): Bulgaria supports the view that the United Nations should adopt a proportional and integrated approach to security and development which could be adapted to the specific situations in various countries and regions emerging from conflict. The approach should comprise measures for strengthening internal security, arms collection and destruction, the creation of social and economic opportunities including training and education of former combatants for their reintegration into civil society. The support of the donor community is essential for the success of this approach;

Paragraph 79 (b): Activities related to disarmament and demobilization should be well planned and, if possible, included in peace agreements between parties to a conflict. All actors involved in the peace settlement should assume specific responsibilities for planning, organizing, implementing, financing and monitoring these activities;

Paragraph 79 (d): The experience of past and present United Nations peacekeeping operations shows the importance of the timely disarming of former combatants and of placing the collected arms under strict governmental or international control in accordance with the peace agreement. The United Nations could play a substantive role in this by developing relevant guidelines, by including, where appropriate, disarmament and demobilization tasks and components in the mandates of its peacekeeping operations and by assisting in the establishment of logistic facilities;

Paragraph 79 (e): Bulgarian customs and other relevant authorities are closely cooperating multilaterally and bilaterally with their respective counterparts in combating illicit trafficking in small arms. Customs cooperation and assistance agreements were signed with the European Union (Protocol 6 to the Europe Agreement between Bulgaria and the European Union (EU)), Turkey, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the near future, similar agreements will be signed with Greece and Romania, and agreements with Argentina, Croatia, Georgia, Armenia, Hungary, Mongolia, the Republic of Moldova, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are being prepared. Cooperation among financial authorities and institutions could also contribute to the efforts against the illicit arms trade;

Paragraph 79 (f): The intelligence information system of the World Customs Organization, which has a regional office for Eastern Europe in Warsaw, is being used for the exchange of information on illicit trafficking and other related data. In the framework of the South-eastern European Cooperative Initiative, a regional information centre for the purposes of combating organized crime will be established in Bucharest;

Paragraph 80 (b): The Law on the Control of Explosive Substances, Arms and Ammunitions and the Regulation on its enforcement determine the types of arms which are permitted for possession by physical and legal persons in Bulgaria. The law is being reviewed at present, and a new draft law is under preparation which will enhance the effectiveness of the control;

Paragraph 80 (c): Bulgaria has introduced an effective arms export control regime which is in line with the internationally harmonized guidelines and norms in this area. Arms export control is subject to the Law on the Control of Foreign Trade Activity with Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and the Regulation on the Enforcement of the Law. Some amendments to the Law and the Regulation will

be introduced in the near future. Under the Law, all companies which trade in arms have to be licensed by a governmental body, the Interdepartmental Council. Permits for each individual foreign trade transaction with arms or dual-use goods and technologies are issued by a special commission at the Ministry of Trade and Tourism. Transiting arms through the territory of Bulgaria is also subject to licensing;

Paragraph 80 (f): A reliable and effective system for safeguarding stocks of small arms and light weapons and ammunition from loss or theft is in place in all storage areas of the defence industry as well as armed and security forces;

Paragraph 80 (h): Bulgaria strictly observes all restrictions on arms transfers imposed by the Security Council, as well as those stemming from our membership in the Waasenaar Arrangement and other international regimes and conventions. Bulgaria has aligned itself to the criteria and principles contained in the European Union code of conduct on arms exports, as well as to the European Union programme for preventing and combating the illicit trafficking in conventional arms;

Paragraph 80 (k): Bulgaria supports, in principle, the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, based on the issues identified in the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts. The final decision on this recommendation should be taken after an agreement is reached on the goals, the scope and the agenda of the conference;

Paragraph 80 (l, m): Bulgaria is in favour of conducting the three studies proposed in the report. There is a reliable system for marking all small arms and light weapons and their main components from the time of production which allows their movement within the territory of the country to be traced.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[18 August 1998]

Mexico believes that the issue of small arms and illicit trafficking in such arms should be given a prominent place in the context of the process of general and complete disarmament, while bearing in mind that in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, the international community gives priority to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mexico supports the recommendations set out in the 1997 report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, both with regard to measures to reduce the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons and with regard to measures to prevent such accumulations and transfers from occurring in future.

Mexico supports the initiation of a study on the problems of ammunition and explosives in all their aspects, as referred to in resolution 52/38 J. The Government of Mexico also supports the recommendation concerning the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects.

Mexico supports the Secretary-General's efforts through its participation in the new group of governmental experts entrusted with preparing a report on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the report on small arms and on further actions recommended to be taken at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. In that regard, the Inter-American Convention against the Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, signed in November 1997, could be extremely useful in connection with the future work of the United Nations in the field in question.

United Nations A/53/169/Add.3

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 October 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 71 (m)
General and complete disarmament: small arms

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contents

Page

II. Replies received from Governments

South Africa 2

98-30785 (E) 211098

South Africa

[Original: English]
[7 October 1998]

South Africa recognizes the important role of the United Nations in global efforts to curtail the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. In this regard, the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (A/52/298) of 27 August 1997 constitutes an important cornerstone of those efforts.

While arms control has traditionally focused on conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, the devastation wrought by the proliferation of light weapons and small arms on socio-economic development generally, and specifically in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, can no longer be ignored.

Within countries, unimpeded access to light weapons and small arms and the use of such weapons have increased the lethality of crime, violence, banditry and civil disobedience. Regionally, disarmament programmes, the demobilization of ex-combatants and reductions in military-industrial complexes are constrained by the existence of large amounts of poorly regulated and indiscriminately used light weapons and small arms.

The diffusion of existing stocks and the import of new weapons endangers the democratic pursuits which are being consolidated and negatively influences the ability of Governments to govern effectively, not only in African countries but around the world.

The challenge in addressing the proliferation of small arms is to marshal the necessary human and financial resources, encourage the sharing of reliable data among national departments and regional partners, coordinate action and raise the profile of the issue to gain the support of Governments, politicians and non-governmental organizations.

Furthermore, the illicit proliferation of small arms is closely linked to other criminal activities and must therefore be addressed within the context of other initiatives aimed at reducing crime. The close link between licit and illicit weapons must also be recognized and approaches to addressing the one must relate to the other both within countries and in regional initiatives.

Therefore, South Africa believes that:

(a) A holistic approach is necessary to address the problem. Concurrent action must be taken at the national, regional and international levels focusing on both licit and illicit small arms and light weapons;

(b) A regional initiative to control the proliferation of weapons in Africa is urgently needed.

Recommended course of action

Approach

Addressing the proliferation of light weapons and small arms in South Africa and its immediate region must be viewed from an inclusive perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development.

Through the coordination of those approaches, a holistic national strategy should be developed that will assess and identify national priorities and determine achievable steps to be taken to contain and reduce the proliferation of weapons.

To reinforce national action, it is imperative that a regional approach be formulated to address the problem of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons that is based on regional concerns and adopts an incremental approach. That will ensure that, as each region of the world develops an indigenous approach, the building blocks will be in place to effectively deal with the issue globally.

The focus areas in all instances should be placed on illicit and licit small arms and light weapons. Thus, national and regional approaches must be developed for both short-term and long-term gains which can have an impact on illicit as well as licit arms circulation.

Practical measures for coordination and cooperation

National

National efforts should focus on enhancing legislation and regulation to prevent legal small arms from becoming illegal through criminal activity, improving, as necessary, regulations on the import, export and transfer of light weapons and small arms, and increasing control over stocks of light weapons belonging to security forces.

Steps should also be taken to reduce the number of existing weapons through voluntary methods (including programmes of collection and destruction) and increasing the capacity of the security forces to identify, seize and destroy illicit weapons.

Regional

Regionally, an important confidence-building measure that will lead to long-term gains for regional cooperation and trust is for countries to ensure greater transparency in their transfers of small arms and light weapons.

In affected regions, countries and regional organizations should take immediate steps to stop the inflow of small arms and light weapons through increased cooperation, harmonization or transfer procedures, tighter border control and intelligence sharing. Attention must also be focused on the recirculation of existing stocks throughout the region and appropriate control measures devised, including increased cooperation among Governments regionally, joint operations and harmonization of priorities.

A cooperatives partnership should be established between Governments, international and regional organizations and the non-governmental community to mobilize public and political support. The role of the non-governmental community in assisting Governments in achieving that support and aiding in the compilation of reliable data regarding small arms and light weapons proliferation in all its aspects should be explored fully.

Steps taken to implement the recommendation of the report on small arms

The South African Government has declared the combating of small arms (firearms) proliferation a South African Police Service priority number one for 1998/99. A coherent strategy to deal with the proliferation of small arms in South Africa has been developed. The strategy represents an integral and holistic approach to introduce stricter control measures and to eventually remove the causal factors of small arms proliferation. In that regard, the National Firearms Plan is being implemented, which deals mainly with the problem of illegal small arms. The objective is to reduce the number of illegal small arms in circulation and to reduce the flow of illegal weapons into South Africa. It also concentrates efforts to ensure the lawful and proper use of licensed firearms.

South Africa has legislation which requires the licensing of all civilian possession of small arms (firearms), including a requirement for the safe storage of such small arms.

In addition, South Africa is committed to a policy of responsibility and accountability in the trade and transfer of all arms. South Africa has established an arms control system which makes provision for a ministerial control body, criteria, principles and guidelines to ensure the responsible transfer and trade in, among others, small arms and light weapons.

The South African Government has adopted a policy on the destruction of a surplus small arms, where appropriate. On 6 October 1997, the South African Police Service melted down 20 tons of firearms: a total of 4,504 confiscated firearms, including pistols, revolvers, rifles, shotguns and home-made firearms. The commercial value of the arms is estimated to be in excess of 2 million rand. Subsequently, the South African Police Service destroyed an additional 11 tons of confiscated ammunition and 10 tons of confiscated small arms, 9 tons of obsolete/outdated ammunition and 20 tons of redundant/obsolete small arms.

South Africa is further committed to stopping the flow of illegal small arms across its borders. South Africa has already entered into agreements with several southern African States with a view to curbing the trafficking of illegal small arms and ammunition. In that regard, the formal cooperation agreement between South Africa and Mozambique has resulted in more than 100 tons of small arms and ammunition being destroyed on site in Mozambique.

Views on the convening of an international conference

An international conference on small arms and light weapons should be held after 1999 to enable Governments and regional organizations to share their experiences, and to facilitate dialogue. The aim of the conference should be to increase cooperation and to avoid duplication of initiatives to ensure that scarce resources are utilized effectively. The conference should formulate an action plan to combat the proliferation problem on the basis of the experiences of indigenous regional approaches, which will have instituted measures to effectively deal with the issue globally.